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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 5419

E.O. 11652: ADS, 4/2/76

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT

REF: FBIS BK 200742Z MAR 75 AND SIX ADDS; B. BANGKOK 4395;

C. BANGKOK 4488

SUMMARY: THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM. IT INCLUDES SPECIFIC MEASURES FOR ACCOMPLISHING ITS GOALS. CRITICS HAVE ATTACKED IT FOR BEING UTOPIAN. IT IS CERTAINLY AMBITIOUS AND, IF SUCCESSFUL, WOULD STEAL THE POLITICAL THUNDER OF THE DEMOCRAT AND LEFTIST OPPOSITION PARTIES. WHETHER THE CONSERVATIVE-DOMINATED KHUKRIT CABINET CAN IMPLEMENT SUCH A PROGRAM IS QUESTIONABLE. END SUMMARY.

INTRODUCTION: PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT PRESENTED HIS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT MARCH 19. REF A REPEATS THE FULL TEXT OF KHUKRIT'S STATEMENT. FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT'S POLICY.

1. ECONOMIC GOALS:

THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT SAYS IT REGARDS ECONOMIC GOALS AS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF ITS POLICY BECAUSE IT IS EXTREMELY CONCERNED WITH THE WELL-BEING OF THE PEOPLE. IT IDENTIFIES THREE

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BROAD ECONOMIC GOALS: ELIMINATE POVERTY BY RAISING THE MONTHLY

INCOME OF EVERY WORKING ADULT TO AT LEAST ONE THOUSAND BAHT (\$50), CREATE JOBS FOR ALL THAI CITIZENS WITHIN FIVE YEARS, AND COMBAT INFLATION.

2. TO ACHIEVE THE ELIMINATION OF POVERTY IN RURAL AREAS, THE GOVERNMENT WILL IMMEDIATELY ALLOCATE AT LEAST 2.5 MILLION BAHT (\$125 MILLION) TO PRECINCT COUNCILS TO HIRE LOCAL LABOR TO DIG IRRIGATION CANALS AND BUILD DAMS AND RESERVOIRS; LAUNCH WITHIN SIX MONTHS A NEW NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN WHICH WILL SYNCHRONIZE LOCAL-LEVEL PLANNING WITH THE NATIONAL PLAN; DIVERT CAPITAL FROM FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS TO FARMERS IN RURAL AREAS; AND GUARANTEE THE PRICES OF AGRICULTURAL CROPS. IT WILL ALSO ATTACK POVERTY IN URBAN AREAS BY SETTING A TARGET OF 20,000 NEW HOUSING UNITS ANNUALLY FOR LOW-INCOME EARNERS AND PROVIDING WITHIN SIX MONTHS WELFARE--INCLUDING FREE BUS SERVICE, EDUCATION FEES AND MEDICAL CARE--FOR FAMILIES OF PERSONS EARNING LESS THAN \$50 A MONTH.

3. TO CREATE JOBS THE GOVERNMENT WILL SET UP A NATIONAL EXPORT PROMOTION AGENCY AND WILL PROMOTE TOURISM, INVESTMENT IN THE PROVINCES, AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT. IT ALSO ESTIMATES THAT THE PROJECT OF CONSTRUCTING 20,000 NEW HOUSING UNITS WILL PROVIDE JOBS FOR 100,000 PEOPLE DIRECTLY AND FOR ANOTHER 250,000 PEOPLE INDIRECTLY.

4. TO EASE THE EFFECTS OF INFLATION THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROVIDE SUFFICIENT WELFARE TO PEOPLE WITH FIXED, LOW INCOMES AND TAKE WHATEVER FINANCIAL MEASURES IT DEEMS NECESSARY. IT WILL TRY TO REDUCE THE COST OF LIVING BY ESTABLISHING A WATCHDOG AGENCY TO CONTROL STATE AND PRIVATE MONOPOLIES.

5. SOCIAL GOALS:

THE GOVERNMENT'S SOCIAL GOALS ARE: TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR AND TO PROVIDE BETTER SOCIAL WELFARE; ORGANIZE A FAIR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM; CHANGE THE SOCIAL VALUES IN THAI SOCIETY; AND EFFECTIVELY MAINTAIN INTERNAL PEACE AND ORDER.

6. TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR, THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO IMPROVE TAX COLLECTION, BUT PROMISES NOT TO INCREASE

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INCOME TAXES DURING ITS FIRST TWO YEARS. IT WILL ALSO SET UP A SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM FOR WORKERS. TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, THE GOVERNMENT PROMISES TO EXPAND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AND TO DECENTRALIZE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS. TO CHANGE SOCIAL VALUES, THE GOVERNMENT WILL USE THE MASS MEDIA TO EXPLAIN THE PEOPLE'S RIGHTS, STAMP OUT IRRATIONAL BELIEFS, AND CREATE A SPIRIT OF FRUGALITY. TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER, THE GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE DRASTIC ACTION AGAINST

CRIMINALS AND INCREASE THE MANPOWER OF SECURITY FORCES.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE GOALS:

THE GOVERNMENT PLEDGES TO UNDERTAKE AS AN URGENT TASK THE RE-ORGANIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION. TO IMPLEMENT THIS PLEDGE, THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO DECENTRALIZE ADMINISTRATION INTO RURAL AREAS BY GIVING GOVERNORS GREATER RESPONSIBILITY AND PROPOSING A LOCAL ADMINISTRATION LAW WHICH WILL PERMIT INDEPENDENT LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATIONS. THE GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO ENCOURAGE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION BY PRE-CINCT COUNCILS THROUGH MAKING THEM THE BASIC WORK UNIT FOR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT.

8. MILITARY GOALS:

TO PRESERVE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY, THE GOVERNMENT PROMISES TO PROVIDE MILITARY FORCES WITH SUFFICIENT WEAPONRY TO PROTECT THE COUNTRY WITHOUT RELYING ON ANYONE ELSE. IT WILL ALSO TRY TO PROMOTE GOOD UNDERSTANDING AMONG SOLDIERS, CIVIL SERVANTS, AND THE PEOPLE.

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9. DIPLOMATIC GOALS:

WE HAVE ALREADY REPORTED ON THE FOREIGN POLICY SECTION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT (REF B) AND ANALYZED THE POLICY STATEMENT ON THE U.S. PRESENCE (REF C). IN GENERAL THE GOVERNMENT

CALLS FOR A MORE INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY. THE MOST IMPORTANT INNOVATIONS ARE THE PLEDGES TO RECOGNIZE THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, AND TO WITHDRAW ALL FOREIGN TROOPS WITHIN ONE YEAR. NEITHER WAS MUCH OF A SURPRISE TO US.

10. REACTIONS:

OPPOSITION PARTIES AND THE PRESS ATTACKED THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT FOR BEING UTOPIAN. OPPONENTS CITED THE PROVISIONS CALLING FOR A MONTHLY MINIMUM INCOME OF \$50 AND FREE BUS RIDES FOR THE POOR IN PARTICULAR AS UNWORKABLE. THEY ALSO QUESTIONED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT COULD INCREASE INCOME, EMPLOYMENT, AND WELFARE WITHOUT INCREASING TAXES, AND WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY FIGHTING INFLATION. THE OMISSION OF ANY MENTION OF MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT LAND REFORM OR CONTROL CORRUPTION ALSO DREW SHARP CRITICISM. SUPPORTERS OF THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT ARGUE THAT, WHILE ITS GOALS MAY BE UTOPIAN, IT HAS OUTLINED PRACTICAL STEPS TO IMPLEMENT THESE GOALS.

11. COMMENT

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THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT OF GOALS IS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE SANYA AND SENI GOVERNMENTS, BUT IT IS MUCH MORE SPECIFIC AND DETAILED. IT DIFFERS FROM PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT POLICY STATEMENTS, ESPECIALLY IN ITS DELINEATION OF SPECIFIC STEPS TO OBTAIN ITS OBJECTIVES, TIME FRAMES FOR ACCOMPLISHING THEM, AND THE BAHT AMOUNTS IT WILL ALLOCATE TO INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS. WHILE THE GOALS ARE SIMILAR TO THE SOCIAL ACTION PARTY'S POLITICAL PLATFORM, THE GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT IS ALSO MORE SPECIFIC THAN THIS DOCUMENT.

12. WHETHER OR NOT THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IS UTOPIAN, IT IS CERTAINLY AMBITIOUS. IT CALLS FOR BROAD AND IMAGINATIVE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS WHICH WOULD ATTACK THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF THAI SOCIETY. IF SUCCESSFUL, SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD UNDERCUT THE APPEAL OF THE DEMOCRATS AND THE LEFTIST PARTIES BY ACHIEVING THEIR GOALS THROUGH A CAPITALIST ECONOMIC SYSTEM. KHUKRIT ALSO WANTS TO GIVE HIS ADMINISTRATION AN IMAGE OF BOLDNESS AND DECISIVENESS AT THE OUTSET, IN ORDER TO DISTINGUISH IT FROM THE SANYA AND SENI GOVERNMENTS. WE SUSPECT THAT THE ORATORY WILL FAR EXCEED ACCOMPLISHMENT, BUT ADMIRE THE SWEET AND THE SOPE. MASTERS

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